



# Senegal: Background and U.S. Relations

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## Summary

Senegal is a small, Francophone nation with a population of 13 million, located on West Africa's Atlantic coast. It has experienced steady, if limited, economic growth in recent years, but remains one of the world's least developed countries. Over 90% of Senegal's population is Muslim, the majority of whom adhere to an indigenous Sufi order. A semi-arid country in Africa's Sahel region, Senegal has struggled with food insecurity and the impact of global climate change.

Although Senegal is a secular democracy and enjoys relative stability by regional standards, recent political trends have raised concerns among analysts and policy makers. President Abdoulaye Wade (pronounced "wahd"), in office since 2000, was initially credited with expanding civil liberties, liberalizing the economy, bolstering government health and education services, and negotiating a landmark peace accord in the restive southern Casamance region. He was returned to office in 2007 in an election that the State Department termed "open, peaceful, and highly competitive." However, Wade's reputation has since been marred by his increasingly unilateral exercise of power, along with reports of rising corruption, nepotism, and restrictions on civil liberties. The president, who is in his 80s, has announced plans to run for a third term in 2012, which may require a constitutional amendment. Public unrest has escalated over government policies and stagnant living conditions, and in March 2011, the government accused a group of opposition and civil society activists of organizing a coup attempt. Opposition groups rejected the allegations as politically motivated. Violence has also increased in Casamance since mid-2009, despite the previously successful 2004 peace deal.

The State Department refers to U.S.-Senegalese relations as "excellent," while noting concerns over negative governance trends. Bilateral engagement has increased in recent years, in part due to Senegal's identity as a moderate, pro-Western Muslim country in a region affected by violent extremism. U.S. foreign assistance focuses on democratic governance, economic growth, rural development, public health, food security, reconciliation in Casamance, and military professionalism. The United States also sees Senegal as an anchor of regional stability and a potential partner in combating transnational security threats, such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and maritime piracy. Senegal is a significant contributor of troops to international peacekeeping missions, and thousands of Senegalese peacekeepers have received U.S. training through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program.

Bilateral aid through State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) accounts has increased steeply in recent years, from \$57.8 million in FY2008 to \$106.3 million in FY2010. The Obama Administration has requested \$119.9 million for FY2012, and Senegal is expected to be one of 13 African focus countries for the Administration's new global food security initiative, Feed the Future. In addition, a \$540 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact was signed in 2009.

Congress may play a role in guiding U.S. policy toward Senegal through its authorization, appropriation, and oversight of foreign assistance, security cooperation programs, and executive branch policies. Some Members of Congress, for example, have expressed concern over the decision to award Senegal an MCC compact in light of recent governance trends.

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## Background

Senegal has remained relatively stable since gaining independence from France in 1960, despite its socioeconomic poverty. It is an electoral democracy and among the few countries in Africa never to have experienced a military coup. Senegal is seen as a diplomatic leader in Africa, particularly among Francophone states. The population is 94% Muslim, most of whom adhere to indigenous Sufi orders. The largest of these is known as the *Mouride* brotherhoods, and *Mouride* leaders are politically and economically influential.<sup>1</sup>

Senegal's first post-independence leader, Léopold Senghor, was a poet and politician celebrated as one of post-colonial Africa's most important intellectuals. Although a self-described socialist and pan-Africanist, Senghor cultivated close ties with the West (in particular, France), and resisted the Eastern Bloc influence then prevalent in several of Senegal's neighbors, such as Guinea and Mali. Senghor presided over a de-facto one-party state through his ruling Socialist Party (PS) until 1981, when he stepped down and was succeeded by the PS's Abdou Diouf. Diouf continued Senghor's pro-Western policies and oversaw Senegal's gradual political liberalization. However, opposition activists alleged that elections throughout the 1980s and 1990s were marred by fraud, and Diouf used repressive tactics to suppress anti-government activism and demonstrations.<sup>2</sup>

In March 2000, longtime opposition leader Abdoulaye Wade (pronounced "wahd") won presidential elections widely seen as free and fair. Wade's victory and the peaceful transfer of power to his Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) were hailed as a landmark for democracy in Senegal and the region, which has seen few democratic transitions between civilian leaders. Recently, however, Senegalese and international observers have raised concerns over apparent democratic "backsliding." Although Senegal has experienced economic growth in recent years, many Senegalese reportedly feel excluded from the resulting wealth, which they perceive as having been concentrated in the capital, Dakar, and among the political and economic elite.

**Figure 1. Map of Senegal**



Source: CRS

<sup>1</sup> For background on the *Mourides*, see John Glover, "Murid Modernity: Historical Perceptions of Islamic Reform, Sufism, and Colonization," in *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal*, Mamadou Diouf and Mara A. Leichtman eds., New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Country Watch, *Senegal Country Review*, 2001/2002. The current president, Abdoulaye Wade, was imprisoned in the mid-1990s on charges widely seen as politically motivated.

## U.S. Interests in Senegal

U.S. policy toward Senegal focuses on encouraging democratic governance, economic growth, rural development, public health, food security, reconciliation in Casamance, and military professionalism. The United States views Senegal as an anchor of regional stability and a potential partner in combating transnational security threats, such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and maritime piracy. U.S. engagement has increased in recent years, in part due to Senegal's identity as a moderate, majority-Muslim country in a region affected by violent extremism. At the same time, the State Department has expressed concern over Senegal's capacity to counter such threats on its own.<sup>3</sup> President Wade has also pursued closer bilateral ties as part of a foreign policy that appears broadly aimed at weaning Senegal from its traditional reliance on France. U.S. officials have nevertheless criticized recent democracy and governance trends and expressed concern over their potential to spark future instability.

### Senegal at a Glance

**Population:** 12.6 million (2011 est.)

**Area:** slightly smaller than South Dakota

**Gross Domestic Product:** \$12.7 billion (2010)

**Population Living on Less Than \$2/Day (Purchasing Power Parity):** 60.4% (2005)

**Key Economic Sectors:** fishing, tourism, groundnuts (peanuts), phosphates, cotton

**Ethnic Groups:** Wolof 43.3%, Fulbe 23.8%, Serer 14.7%, Jola 3.7%, Mandinka 3%, European and Lebanese 1%, other groups

**Religion:** Muslim 94%, Christian 5% (mostly Roman Catholic), indigenous beliefs 1%

**Languages:** French (official), Wolof, other local languages

**Life Expectancy at Birth:** 59.8 years

**Literacy Rate:** 42% (2006 est.)

**Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate:** 0.9% (2009 est.)

**Major Trading Partners:** France, Mali, United Kingdom, India, China, The Gambia, Italy, Belgium, Thailand, the Netherlands

*Sources:* CIA World Factbook 2011; World Bank

## Recent Congressional Actions

Congress has played a role in U.S. policy toward Senegal through the annual appropriation of foreign assistance and via the oversight of executive branch policies and strategies. Recent congressional interest has arisen over a number of issues, including:

- socioeconomic development, health outcomes, and food security;
- democracy and governance trends;
- the management of bilateral assistance, in particular Senegal's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact, amid concerns over corruption;
- Senegal's troop contributions to international peacekeeping; and
- Senegal's capacity to counter transnational security threats.

Several recent delegations of Members and staff have visited Senegal. President Wade has also addressed congressional audiences on several occasions, including to mark the signing of Senegal's MCC compact in September 2009 and at a congressional "Africa Day" celebration in July 2010.

<sup>3</sup> See State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010*, June 14, 2010; State Department Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, August 5, 2010.

Several pieces of draft legislation introduced during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress contained references to Senegal. These included H.Con.Res. 16, S. 1966, H.R. 5268, and H.Res. 1405. The Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (S. 1390) was accompanied by a report noting that the Senate Armed Services Committee “shares the [Defense] Department’s concerns about the burgeoning illegal narcotics trade in West Africa and urges the Department to expand its authorized activities with Guinea-Bissau and Senegal” under Section 1033 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (P.L. 105-85), as amended.<sup>4</sup> This language was not included in the final conference report on the bill, which was passed into law as P.L. 111-84 on October 28, 2009.

## Politics

Wade benefited from widespread support following his initial electoral victory in 2000, and he was reelected in 2007. However, public discontent with the government, particularly among young people, has risen over continuing economic hardships and high unemployment; perceptions of growing corruption and nepotism; and the president’s increasingly unilateral exercise of power. Since 2008, popular demonstrations have repeatedly erupted over a range of issues, including power cuts, unemployment, food prices, and the president’s attempts to prolong his time in office. In some cases, demonstrations have led to rioting and violence. The government has at times sought to ban public protests, as in December 2010 when opposition parties organized a march in Dakar against wasteful public spending. On March 19, 2011, as opposition leaders convened a protest rally modeled after mass uprisings in North Africa and attended by an estimated 5,000 people, the government arrested a group of civil society and opposition party activists and claimed they were organizing a coup attempt. Opposition leaders rejected the allegations as politically motivated.<sup>5</sup>

Wade has stated that he intends to run for reelection in 2012, when he will be 86 years old.<sup>6</sup> Such a move would be in apparent contravention of the constitution, which imposes a two-term limit, and of Wade’s own campaign promises in 2007.<sup>7</sup> The president and his supporters contend that his current term (2007-2012) is his first under the 2001 constitution that set the two-term limit, and that he is therefore entitled to run once more. However, most observers believe Wade’s candidacy would require a constitutional amendment.<sup>8</sup> In any case, an amendment to the constitution could potentially be easy to secure, given the ruling party’s overwhelming majority in the national legislature.

## Recent Elections

While Senegal’s recent elections have been positively viewed by the international community, the conduct of national elections in 2007 caused a standoff between the ruling party and the opposition that continues to affect national-level politics. Wade won reelection in February 2007

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<sup>4</sup> S.Rept. 111-35, July 2, 2009. Section 1033 provides the Defense Department with authority to provide support for the counternarcotics activities of certain foreign governments.

<sup>5</sup> Coumba Sylla, “Senegal Opposition Deride Plot Accusation,” AFP, March 19, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Abdoulaye Wade Déclare Sa Candidature Pour 2012,” September 17, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Agence France Presse (AFP), “Senegal’s Wade Not Eligible to Run in 2012: Reports,” August 23, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), “Country Watchlist: Senegal,” October 1, 2009.

with 56% of the vote in a field of 15 candidates; the election was ascertained to be largely free and fair by international monitors, despite minor irregularities.<sup>9</sup> Wade's closest rival was a former ally and prime minister, Idrissa Seck, who captured 15%. Ousmane Tanor Dieng, of the former ruling Socialist Party, garnered 13.6%, while a number of smaller parties split the remaining votes. Turnout was reported at 73% of registered voters.<sup>10</sup> However, the main opposition coalition of 12 parties contested the results and called for the redrawing of district boundaries and the replacement of the head of the national elections commission, whom opposition leaders perceived as biased toward the ruling party. After accusing Wade of refusing to discuss their concerns, the opposition coalition boycotted legislative elections held in June 2007. Consequently, Wade's PDS and allied parties—known as the *Sopi* ("Change") coalition—swept the National Assembly, capturing 131 out of 150 seats. Turnout was reportedly low.<sup>11</sup>

In August 2007, elections were held for 35 seats in a new upper legislative chamber, the Senate. Under the 2006 constitutional amendment that created the Senate, 35 of its 100 members are elected by parliamentary deputies and regional council representatives, while 65 are appointed by the president. Opposition parties, which had opposed the Senate's creation, boycotted the vote. Wade's PDS captured 34 of the contested seats, with the remaining one going to an allied party.

While Wade remains popular among some segments of the population, signs of an electoral backlash, inspired by political as well as economic grievances, have recently emerged. Some analysts have traced this discontent to a "crisis of legitimacy" following the 2007 boycott, though Senegalese discontent with ruling authorities dates back much farther—including to pre-Wade administrations.<sup>12</sup> In local elections held in 2009, the opposition made significant gains, winning a majority of seats and nearly all urban areas. The opposition also defeated Wade's son, Karim, in the race for mayor of Dakar. Karim was subsequently appointed to head a new Ministry of International Cooperation, National Planning, Air Transport, and Infrastructure; he currently serves as Energy Minister. This reinforced concern among many Senegalese that Wade was planning a dynastic succession by promoting his son's political aspirations.<sup>13</sup> While discontent reportedly remains high, the peaceful acceptance of opposition gains in 2009 convinced some observers that the electoral system retained a potential for fairness.

## Concerns Over Political Trends

Following his election in 2000, Wade initially took steps to expand government transparency and accountability. For example, in 2001, a new constitution was approved by referendum that reduced presidential terms from seven to five years and set a two-term limit. Wade has received praise over his handling of the economy and his commitment to raising education and health standards. Recently, however, opposition leaders, rights advocates, and diplomats have expressed

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<sup>9</sup> State Department, "2009 Human Rights Report: Senegal," March 2010. The State Department elsewhere referred to the 2000 and 2007 elections as "open, peaceful, and highly competitive." State Department, "Background Note: Senegal," updated January 21, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> State Department, "Background Note."

<sup>11</sup> Official figures claimed 38% turnout, and opposition leaders contended actual turnout was far lower.

<sup>12</sup> Penda Mbow, "Senegal: The Return of Personalism," *Journal of Democracy*, January 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Wade has, at times, sought to dispel such succession rumors, stating, "I have no intention of putting my son in my place before I go.... But he is a citizen of Senegal and he is free to stand in elections when he wants to." AFP, "Senegal's Wade Denies Grooming Son for Presidency," July 15, 2010. He has also defended Karim Wade's cabinet appointments as merit-based. AFP, "Senegal's President Denies Dynastic Ambitions," October 23, 2010.



concerns over increasing authoritarianism, nepotism, and abuses of power by senior officials. In 2009, Freedom House downgraded Senegal's ranking on political and civil liberties from "Free" to "Partly Free," attributing the change to "the growing authoritarian power of the president and ruling party."<sup>14</sup> Still, civil society organizations, the media, and the opposition operate with a high degree of freedom, particularly when compared to other countries in the region.

Perceptions of cronyism—particularly the sense that Wade is promoting his son, Karim, as a presidential successor—have provoked particular ire among the Senegalese public. Controversy was also sparked by Wade's decision, in 2009, to construct a \$27 million monument to the "African Renaissance," a 50-yard-high bronze statue that overlooks Dakar. Wade declared himself the "intellectual owner" of the monument and claimed he was therefore entitled to a 35% cut of future related tourism revenues. The statue, reportedly partly financed by North Korea, was inaugurated in April 2010 for Senegal's celebration of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence.<sup>15</sup> News coverage, particularly in the Senegalese press, was largely negative, and the statue sparked local opposition on political, economic, and esthetic grounds.<sup>16</sup>

Wade has also taken steps to centralize power in a system that already endows the presidency with significant authority. Under Senegal's constitution, the prime minister is appointed by the president, who can dismiss him at will, and the president also appoints the justices of the country's highest appeals court and constitutional council. The further creation, in 2006, of a Senate in which 65 of 100 members are selected by the president, followed by the ruling party's electoral sweep in 2007, led local civil society groups to warn of "the de-facto return of a single-party system in all state institutions."<sup>17</sup> In 2008, Wade successfully backed a constitutional amendment reextending the presidential term from five to seven years.<sup>18</sup> While the change does not apply to Wade's current term in office, it is expected to enter into force following the next presidential election in 2012. Some advocates allege that the president has taken steps to undermine the independence of regulatory and oversight bodies, including the electoral commission, the media regulator, and the judiciary.<sup>19</sup> The Senegalese press has also portrayed Wade as taking harsh steps to marginalize potential political opponents, such as former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck, who was dismissed from his position in 2004, then arrested and charged with embezzlement and threatening national security. Seck was never granted a trial; he was held in prison for over six months before all charges were eventually dropped.

In 2008, opposition parties organized a series of national conferences that brought together political parties and non-governmental organizations to discuss perceived economic, political, and social problems. The discussions concluded that greater parliamentary scrutiny of the executive and a more independent judiciary were needed to strengthen democratic participation and accountability. They also concluded that elected officials and appointed heads of state agencies

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<sup>14</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World in 2009*, August 16, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Reuters, "Statue Casts Shadow on Dakar's African Renaissance," August 19, 2009. Wade has stated that his share of revenues will go to care for poor children.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Associated Press (AP), "Rising Amid Squalor, Senegal Monument Stirs Anger," September 23, 2009; *Walfadjri*, "Sermon De Ce Vendredi : Les imams prêchent contre le monument de la Renaissance," December 11 2009; RFI, "Manifestation de l'Opposition Sénégalaise Contre le Monument de la Renaissance Africaine," April 3, 2010; *Le Quotidien*, "Le Monument de la Renaissance Africaine et la Fumisterie Religieuse des Sénégalais," April 14, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> *Wal Fadjri*, "Face à la Crise Sociale, Politique, Economique - La Société Civile Vers la Création d'un Système d'Alerte et d'Action Unitaire," October 10, 2007; CRS translation from the French.

<sup>18</sup> The legislative proposal was submitted by the then-Interior Minister; the legislature is controlled by the ruling PDS.

<sup>19</sup> Penda Mbow, "Senegal: The Return of Personalism," op. cit.

should be required to declare their assets upon assuming and leaving their posts, as an anti-corruption measure. Wade's administration declined to participate in the consultations.<sup>20</sup>

## Governance

Senegal has a good human rights record and relatively effective government service provision compared to other countries in the region. Senegal has been particularly praised for its HIV/AIDS programs, which were initiated in the mid-1980s—long before most—and have contributed to a low rate of infection (less than 1% of the adult population) compared to many African countries.<sup>21</sup> Senegal's anti-malaria program, launched in 2005, has also received praise.<sup>22</sup> However, observers contend that official corruption is rising, and some analysts have critiqued the concentration of wealth in the capital and among a relatively small elite. Attempts by Wade and other ruling party officials to limit press freedom have also raised concerns among some analysts and rights groups.

The Senegalese government has made improvements in agriculture and rural infrastructure a policy priority, along with containing the spread of HIV/AIDS and expanding access to primary education. According to the World Bank Institute, "government effectiveness" in Senegal is above the worldwide median, and improved between 2003 and 2008.<sup>23</sup> However, on the same scale, Senegal ranked lower in "voice and accountability" and "control of corruption" in 2008 (latest data available) than in either 2003 or 1998.<sup>24</sup> According to the government, 40% of the national budget is invested in education, and the rate of immunization has improved significantly over the past 10 years.<sup>25</sup> Still, many rural areas and some urban neighborhoods remain underserved by roads, electricity, basic sanitation, and drinking water. Frustrations over high unemployment, severe power cuts, and perceived shortcomings in social welfare provision have sparked public unrest, particularly in Dakar and other urban centers. Alleged gaps in service provision in Casamance have also provided a basis for ongoing conflict there, though the government has attempted to improve service delivery in the region in recent years, with donor assistance.<sup>26</sup>

## Corruption

The State Department in 2011 referred to a "gradual erosion of good governance and transparency" in Senegal.<sup>27</sup> Senegal's rank on Transparency International's Corruptions Perceptions Index has dropped in recent years, falling from 71 in 2007 to 105 in 2010, out of 178

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<sup>20</sup> EIU, "Senegal Politics: Conclusions of the *Assises Nationales* Are Published," July 16, 2009; Freedom House, "Senegal," *Freedom in the World* 2009.

<sup>21</sup> The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) attributes Senegal's success at maintaining low HIV prevalence to "the confluence of a number of factors, including strong political leadership, early involvement and leadership among religious leaders, conservative cultural norms regarding sexual practices, and a comprehensive strategic approach implemented early in the epidemic." *Health Profile: Senegal, HIV/AIDS*, 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Olivier Talles, "Ce Qui Va de Mieux: Recul Spectaculaire du Paludisme au Sénégal," *La Croix*, November 5, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> D. Kaufmann et al, "Governance Indicators for 1996-2008," in World Bank Institute, *Governance Matters: 2009*.

<sup>24</sup> D. Kaufmann et al, "Governance Indicators for 1996-2008."

<sup>25</sup> AFP, "Senegal President Says No Mistakes in 10 Years in Power," March 19, 2010; World Health Organization, "Immunization Profile – Senegal," updated December 2009.

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., USAID, *Evaluation of the USAID Peace-Building Program in Casamance and Sub-Region*, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> State Department, FY2012 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, March 2011.

countries assessed. Senegal nevertheless continues to rank better on the Index than many of its neighbors, including fellow democracies such as Mali, Benin, and Niger. Several recent high-profile corruption scandals have negatively affected the government's reputation. For example, in early 2010, Senegalese officials reportedly attempted to extort \$200 million from a Luxembourg-based telecommunications company, Millicom.<sup>28</sup> In September 2009, Wade gave nearly \$200,000 in cash to the outgoing International Monetary Fund (IMF) resident representative during a meeting over dinner in September 2009. Wade later admitted to giving the money as a "farewell gift," but denied he was attempting to influence IMF assessments.<sup>29</sup>

The mechanisms of corruption reportedly vary from petty bribes to contractual kickbacks and embezzlement from state-owned accounts. Some analysts allege that Wade's administration has created opportunities for corruption through the privatization of parastatals, such as the national telecommunications agency, and by creating new "special agencies" in charge of aspects of state procurement, such as the Agency for Investments and the National Agency for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.<sup>30</sup> The latter, then headed by Wade's son, Karim, oversaw government procurement for large public infrastructure projects initiated ahead of Senegal's hosting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in 2008, and was repeatedly implicated in corruption allegations.<sup>31</sup> The government has recently taken small steps to combat corruption, such as establishing audit and anti-corruption commissions and an independent authority to oversee government procurement.<sup>32</sup> It remains to be seen how effective and independent these new entities will be. U.S. embassy officials have also recently praised Senegal's efforts to increase budget transparency, in line with pressure from international financial institutions and bilateral donors, including through the use of software that tracks government accounting.<sup>33</sup>

## Human Rights and Press Freedom

According to the 2009 State Department human rights report, the government "generally respected citizens' rights," although the report cited problems in a number of areas, including prison conditions and treatment of prisoners; corruption; violence and discrimination against women; child abuse, child labor, and child marriage; and human trafficking. The report also documented abuses by Casamance rebel factions, including extra-judicial killings.<sup>34</sup> Amnesty International has accused Senegalese security forces of torturing suspects in custody in connection with criminal cases, civil offenses, and the conflict in Casamance, a practice that the government contends is rare and that it has promised to combat.<sup>35</sup> The 1999 Penal Law outlawed domestic violence and female genital mutilation; however, implementation has been uneven, and

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Delevingne, "The Joy Of Doing Business In Africa: How Senegalese Politicians Tried To Shake Down Millicom For \$200 Million," *Business Insider*, February 4, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> IMF, "IMF Statement on Investigation of Incident in Senegal," October 26, 2009; AFP, "Senegal President Admits 'Gift' to IMF Agent: Fund," October 27, 2009. The money was returned to the government of Senegal.

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Tarik Dahou and Vincent Foucher, "Le Sénégal, Entre Changement Politique et Révolution Passive. 'Sopi' or not 'Sopi'?" *Politique Africaine*, December 2004.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Abdou Latif Coulibaly, *Contes et Mecomptes de l'ANOCI*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Oxford Analytica, "Senegal: Governance Concerns Rise Over Wade Agenda," July 29 2010.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Embassy Dakar, "Senegal's Budget Process is Transparent [UNCLASSIFIED]," May 4, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> State Department, "2009 Human Rights Report."

<sup>35</sup> Amnesty International, *Senegal: Land of Impunity*, September 15, 2010. The government acknowledged that torture had occurred, albeit with "minimal" frequency, and "renewed its engagement to spare no effort" to eradicate such practices. AFP, "Senegal: La Pratique de la Torture Existe Mais Est 'Minime' (Gouvernement)," September 16, 2010.

both are reportedly widespread.<sup>36</sup> Senegalese law also criminalizes homosexuality, and violence against gay men (and men perceived as gay), including by police, is common.<sup>37</sup> Human rights organizations have criticized the government for perceived delays in prosecuting former Chadian President Hissène Habré, who lives in Senegal, for crimes allegedly committed under his leadership in Chad (1982-1990).<sup>38</sup>

A 2010 Human Rights Watch report documented abuses and economic exploitation of children by teachers and traditional leaders at Senegalese Quranic schools, where tens of thousands of young boys, often separated from their families, receive religious instruction.<sup>39</sup> In response to the report and related U.S. pressure over child trafficking, the government announced it would enforce a ban on street begging in Dakar and brought seven Quranic teachers to trial. However, police sweeps and other enforcement efforts raised new child protection concerns.<sup>40</sup>

Senegal has long been considered a regional leader in press freedom. Local media express a diverse range of political opinions and frequently provide a platform for anti-government views. Since 2008, however, criminal prosecutions of journalists have escalated, along with physical attacks against members of the press and media outlets, allegedly biased enforcement of media regulation by state agencies, and verbal assaults on the media by Wade and other officials. In August 2008, the offices and employees of two private newspapers were attacked by men reportedly driving government vehicles, shortly after a government minister threatened retaliation against newspapers that had run critical stories. A dozen individuals convicted in the attacks later benefitted from a presidential pardon.<sup>41</sup> For two years, the government prevented a media group owned by renowned Senegalese musician Youssou Ndour, who has been publicly critical of Wade, from obtaining a license to start a private television station; a license was finally granted in May 2010. While formal censorship is rare, the government has also reportedly attempted to suppress the sale of publications critical of Wade's governance record.<sup>42</sup>

## The Economy

Senegal is a semi-arid, predominantly agrarian country with few natural resources. Its key foreign exchange earners are fishing, peanuts, phosphates, and tourism. Senegal is also highly dependent

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<sup>36</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Social Institutions and Gender Index, at <http://genderindex.org/country/senegal>.

<sup>37</sup> HRW, *Fear for Life: Violence Against Gay Men and Men Perceived as Gay in Senegal*, November 2010.

<sup>38</sup> In July 2006, the African Union directed Senegal to prosecute Habré after Belgium issued an international arrest warrant charging him with crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture. Wade initially agreed to a prosecution, and the Senegalese legislature amended the constitution and passed legislation aimed at removing any legal obstacles. However, the government has since stalled, contending that action requires significant additional donor funding. In March 2011, Senegal and the AU agreed to create, in Senegal, an "ad hoc" international court with jurisdiction to try Habré. For background, see HRW, "The Case Against Hissène Habré, an 'African Pinochet,'" at <http://www.hrw.org/justice/habre/>.

<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), *"Off the Backs of the Children": Forced Begging and Other Abuses against Talibés in Senegal*, April 15, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, "Beggars Swept Out of Central Dakar as Senegal Attempts to Appease US," AP, September 5, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, *Attacks on the Press in 2009*.

<sup>42</sup> State Department, "2009 Human Rights Report."

on foreign aid, which in 2007 represented about 23% of overall government spending.<sup>43</sup> Remittances from Senegalese workers abroad also provide significant financial inflows, reportedly totaling \$902 million in 2007, or triple the level of foreign direct investment.<sup>44</sup> While over 77% of the workforce is engaged in (mostly subsistence) agriculture, the service sector is responsible for over 63% of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>45</sup> Although government investments in infrastructure, pro-business reforms, and donor assistance have provided the conditions for relatively strong economic growth in the past decade, Senegal continues to be one of the world's least developed countries (LDCs), as measured by the United Nations. It experienced 4.0% average annual growth between 1997 and 2002, and annual growth of over 5.5% between 2003 and 2006, according to the IMF.<sup>46</sup> The economy was affected by the global economic crisis: the IMF estimates that there was a "marked slowdown" in real GDP growth in 2008 and 2009, to 3.2% and 2.2% annually, respectively.<sup>47</sup> The IMF estimates that growth rebounded to 4% in 2010 and projects that it will reach 4.4% in 2011.<sup>48</sup>

Wade's administration has undertaken reforms aimed at maintaining macroeconomic stability, improving the management of public finances, enhancing the competitiveness of key sectors, and weaning parastatal firms off public subsidies. In 2009, the World Bank named Senegal one of the world's "top ten reformers," citing regulatory and trade reforms.<sup>49</sup> Still, some economic analysts contend that bureaucratic burdens placed on the operation of private businesses; corruption; rigid labor laws; a lack of transparency in public contracting; shortfalls in judicial independence and efficiency; and opaque land titling procedures hinder further growth.<sup>50</sup> Chronic electricity shortages also pose a serious challenge to private sector development. Some analysts have also criticized Wade's focus on "prestige" projects, such as a new international airport and new highways in Dakar, to the perceived exclusion of projects more likely to have a broad socioeconomic impact.<sup>51</sup>

The IMF has expressed approval for the government's fiscal management, although it also observed in 2009 that "recurring governance and transparency concerns constitute risks to the program—and ultimately economic growth."<sup>52</sup> In 2010, the IMF noted that Senegal's real GDP growth over the previous 15 years had lagged behind Africa's "best-performing, non-oil exporting countries" by at least 2% annually; the Fund attributed the difference to Senegal's relative deficiencies in a number of areas "including infrastructure, non-price competitiveness, and

<sup>43</sup> State Department, "Background Note." According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Senegal received over a billion dollars in official development assistance in 2009, excluding debt relief.

<sup>44</sup> State Department, "Background Note."

<sup>45</sup> CIA World Factbook, statistics dated 2010.

<sup>46</sup> IMF Regional Economic Outlook data, updated April 2009; IMF, "Statement at the Conclusion of an IMF Mission to Senegal," March 25, 2010. The economy was nonetheless hit hard by the global economic crisis: the IMF estimates that real GDP growth averaged about 2% in 2008 and 2009, but predicts that growth will rebound to roughly 3.5% in 2010.

<sup>47</sup> IMF, *Senegal: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Annual Progress Report*, December 2010.

<sup>48</sup> IMF, "IMF Executive Board Completes Final Review Under PSI with Senegal and Approves New Three-Year PSI," Press Release No. 10/469, December 3, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> World Bank, "Top Ten Reformers from *Doing Business 2009*," at [www.doingbusiness.org].

<sup>50</sup> EIU, *Senegal*, April 2010; State Department, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Senegal," May 2010. The lack of transparency in public contracting persists despite the passage of a 2008 law to enhance transparency in public procurement and public tenders.

<sup>51</sup> Oxford Analytica, "Senegal: Governance Concerns Rise Over Wade Agenda," July 29 2010.

<sup>52</sup> IMF, *Fourth Review Under the Policy Support Instrument and Second Review Under the Exogenous Shocks Facility*, December 7, 2009.

strength of fiscal institutions, as well as factors such as governance, the quality of institutions, and financial market development.”<sup>53</sup>

Senegal continues to face challenges in alleviating poverty and addressing the burden of disease.<sup>54</sup> Socioeconomic indicators are poor. Senegal ranked 144 out of 169 countries assessed by the 2010 U.N. Human Development Index. Seventeen percent of the population is undernourished, and 31% of the population lacks reliable access to clean water, according to the World Bank. Nearly 60% of the adult population is illiterate. Like many Sahel countries, Senegal suffers from food insecurity, attributable in part to a dry and unpredictable climate, poor water and land management, demographic pressures, and periodic locust infestations. It relies on imports for 70% of its food supply – a rate higher than any other country in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>55</sup> The effects of global climate change are expected to further worsen food insecurity in Senegal, as in much of the region.<sup>56</sup> Discontent over socioeconomic conditions has contributed to a high rate of emigration, particularly among young men and often in highly unsafe conditions.<sup>57</sup>

## Security Issues

Senegal’s primary internal security concern is unrest in the southern Casamance region, where a low-level separatist insurgency persists despite a landmark 2004 peace agreement. Transnational security threats include violent extremism, narcotics trafficking, and organized crime. Senegal has a relatively well-trained and disciplined military of about 17,000 personnel. The United States provides a range of security assistance and cooperation (see “Security Assistance and Cooperation,” below).

### Violent Extremism

According to the State Department, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which is active in neighboring Mauritania and Mali, has attempted to set up transit points and facilitation networks in Senegal, though it has not launched attacks there. The State Department reported that Senegalese authorities “cooperated with the United States to identify terrorist groups operating in Senegalese territory,” but that Senegal “lacked specific counterterrorism legislation and current laws made it difficult to prosecute terrorist suspects. More work remained to be done to develop first responder services, to facilitate the quick sharing of information between agencies, and to control porous borders where police and security services were undermanned and ill-equipped to prevent illicit cross-border trafficking.”<sup>58</sup> Wade has called for greater regional cooperation and

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<sup>53</sup> IMF, “IMF Executive Board Completes Final Review,” op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> A UNICEF spokesperson stated in December 2010 that 75% of rural households were affected by “chronic poverty.” Agence de Presse Sénégalaise (APS), “Au Sénégal, 6 Ménages Sur 10 Sont Pauvres ou Vulnérables, Selon la Représentante de l’UNICEF,” December 13, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. government, “Feed the Future,” Senegal FY2010 Implementation Plan, at [http://www.feedthefuture.gov/documents/FTF\\_2010\\_Implementation\\_Plan\\_Senegal.pdf](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/documents/FTF_2010_Implementation_Plan_Senegal.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> UNDP and Government of Senegal, *Changement Climatique, Sécurité Alimentaire et Développement Humain*, 2010; Oxfam Senegal profile, December 2009.

<sup>57</sup> See International Organization on Migration (IOM), *Migration au Sénégal: Profil National*, 2009.

<sup>58</sup> State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, August 5, 2010. For background on AQIM, see CRS Report R41070, *Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, coordinated by John Rollins.

Western donor support in efforts to counter AQIM, while local media commentators have raised concerns over Senegal's ability to patrol its borders against transnational terrorists.<sup>59</sup> Many analysts believe that although Senegal's population is largely Muslim, there is little indigenous support for Islamist extremism, given the country's long history of religious tolerance.

## **The Casamance Conflict**

Senegal's Casamance region has suffered from a low-level but disruptive separatist conflict since the early 1980s. An agriculturally fertile region that borders Guinea-Bissau to the south, Casamance is cut off from northern Senegal by The Gambia. The region is also religiously and ethnically distinct. It was historically populated by members of the Diola (also spelled Jola) ethnic group, who largely follow Christian and animist beliefs, in contrast to the country's Muslim majority.<sup>60</sup> Drawing partly on Diola perceptions of economic and political marginalization, the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC, after its French acronym) initiated an armed insurgency in 1982 after non-violent protests were harshly repressed.<sup>61</sup> Attacks on military and government targets spiraled during the 1990s, and were met with stepped-up military operations and reported human rights abuses by Senegalese troops. In addition, the use of land mines hindered regional economic growth and development, further entrenching local grievances and isolation.<sup>62</sup>

The Casamance conflict is highly localized and poses little existential threat to the central government. However, it has long evaded attempts to achieve a comprehensive peace. The MFDC split into two main factions in the 1990s, one of which reportedly received support from The Gambia, the other from Guinea-Bissau. Each faction has reportedly since splintered many times. Multiple cease-fires and peace agreements have been signed between the government and various MFDC leaders, culminating in a landmark agreement brokered by President Wade in 2004 that brought relative stability to the region.

Violence has resurged since mid-2009, with several deadly confrontations between remnant rebel forces and government troops. A Senegalese military source alleged in December 2010 that rebel fighters had displayed "new equipment... such as rocket launchers, mortars, and machine guns"; the interception of an Iranian arms shipment in Nigeria in late 2010 caused Senegal to break off diplomatic relations in February (see "Foreign Relations," below).<sup>63</sup> While the conflict remains locally contained, it has hurt the regional economy, which is ordinarily a tourism destination, and caused population displacements in rural areas. Government-sponsored peace talks are ostensibly ongoing, but are relatively inactive due partly to MFDC fragmentation, and the government has

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<sup>59</sup> Helen Vesperini, "African Leaders Urged to Tackle Al-Qaeda Threat," AFP, February 2, 2010; *Walfadjri*, "Terrorisme Religieux dans le Sahel—AQMI aux Portes du Sénégal," August 3, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> While the Diola constitute a majority in Casamance, they represent only about 4% of the national population. There are also significant Diola communities in Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia. Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Senegal: Diola (Jola)," 2008.

<sup>61</sup> For background on the MFDC, see Ferdinand de Jong and Geneviève Gasser, "Contested Casamance," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 39, 2 (2005).

<sup>62</sup> Limited demining operations have taken place in recent years with international support, but they have been hindered by lack of funds and logistical challenges. The MFDC planted mines without keeping track of their location, while the Senegalese army denies using any landmines, and the government ratified the comprehensive landmine banning treaty in 1998. IRIN, *Laying Landmines to Rest?*, Special Report, November 2004.

<sup>63</sup> AFP, "Violence Surges in Casamance as Peace Process Stays Blocked," December 29, 2010.

rejected the rebels' demand for a regional referendum on self-determination.<sup>64</sup> MFDC fighters and ex-combatants reportedly also engage in banditry and organized crime, including narcotics and arms trafficking, further entrenching the presence of transnational crime networks.<sup>65</sup>

## **Illegal Trafficking and Organized Crime**

The U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) assesses the total value of illicit trafficking flows through Senegal at 8.2 times the value of GDP.<sup>66</sup> The area that has drawn the most international concern is the flow of cocaine from South America to Europe: the drug reportedly enters Senegal either overland or by sea via neighboring Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, or directly by air. Analysts believe transnational drug flows represent a significant potential threat to regional stability and the rule of law in West Africa. Narcotics trafficking presents opportunities for enrichment that far outweigh the region's formal economies, and can distort economic and governance incentives as powerful individuals seek to maintain their access to the financial benefits of such flows.<sup>67</sup>

Three large cocaine seizures were reported in Senegal in 2007, totaling 1,200 kg; 1,250 kg; and 3,100 kg respectively.<sup>68</sup> In early 2009, a Senegalese court convicted and sentenced to jail five South American nationals arrested in connection with one of the 2007 seizures. Total cocaine flows through West Africa are reported to have declined since their peak in 2008.<sup>69</sup> Still, seizures have continued, albeit in smaller quantities than those reported in 2007. Most appear to be the product of accident and luck, rather than sustained law enforcement investigations.

The cocaine trade is thought to benefit from well-established regional smuggling networks and routes that are also leveraged for duty-free cigarettes, counterfeit prescription drugs, small arms, and persons.<sup>70</sup> Senegal's relatively good transportation and telecommunications infrastructure may also serve as a draw for traffickers. Senegal is a significant source and hub for human trafficking between West Africa and Europe. In 2010, the State Department classified Senegal as "Tier 2 Watchlist" under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA, P.L. 106-386).<sup>71</sup>

Though Senegal's judiciary and law enforcement agencies are relatively effective compared to many in the region, these institutions are still considered too weak to effectively prevent or prosecute organized crime and related financial crimes, such as money laundering and terrorist financing. Significant portions of the economy are cash-based. According to the State Department, "reportedly, most money laundering involves domestically generated proceeds from

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<sup>64</sup> AFP, "Senegal Says No to Casamance Independence Referendum," February 21, 2011.

<sup>65</sup> U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa: A Threat Assessment*, July 2009. According to most reports, MFDC factions long financed themselves through proceeds from the sub-regional trade in hashish, but the entry of cocaine and other narcotics into the region has reportedly altered existing trafficking networks and the dynamics of the conflict.

<sup>66</sup> UNODC, *Transnational Trafficking*, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> See CRS Report R40838, *Illegal Drug Trade in Africa: Trends and U.S. Policy*, by Liana Sun Wyler and Nicolas Cook.

<sup>68</sup> UNODC, *World Drug Report 2010*.

<sup>69</sup> UNODC, *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa*.

<sup>70</sup> UNODC, *Transnational Trafficking and the Rule of Law in West Africa*.

<sup>71</sup> State Department, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2010*. See also CRS Report RL34317, *Trafficking in Persons: U.S. Policy and Issues for Congress*, by Alison Siskin and Liana Sun Wyler.



corruption and embezzlement.... Also of concern are criminal figures who launder and invest their personal and their organization's proceeds from the growing West Africa narcotics trade.... Other areas of concern include the transportation of cash, gold and gems through Senegal's airport and across its porous borders."<sup>72</sup> Money laundering associated with the drug trade is thought to have fueled a recent boom in real estate construction in Dakar and the coastal city of Mbour.<sup>73</sup> Financial flows associated with money laundering may distort legitimate markets, posing a threat to long-term growth and stability, while the potential for terrorist financing may threaten U.S. national security interests.

## Foreign Relations

Senegal has long benefited from close partnerships with Western donors. At the same time, its leaders have increasingly pursued non-traditional sources of economic support, including from Iran, Arab states, and China, while maintaining strong ties to France, the European Union, and the United States. For example, President Wade broke diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 2005; economic and diplomatic cooperation with China has reportedly since expanded.<sup>74</sup> Ties with the Middle East are also increasingly important. This strategy appears to be motivated by both pragmatism and a desire to emphasize independence and diplomatic strengths to a domestic audience. Senegal also appears to be playing potential rivals off one another in order to spark greater offers of aid and investment, thereby maximizing potential sources of economic assistance and hedging against conditions placed on Western aid flows.

Senegal cultivates a position of regional diplomatic leadership and seeks a high profile in regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is a significant contributor of peacekeepers in Africa and elsewhere. As of June 2010, over 1,500 Senegalese troops (nearly one-tenth of Senegal's total armed forces) and roughly 770 police were serving in U.N. peacekeeping missions, notably in Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Darfur, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>75</sup> The largest Senegalese peacekeeping contingent is in Darfur, with over 1,300 soldiers and police.

## A Changing Relationship With France

Senegal's relationship with France has historically been a source of vital economic and security support. Dakar served as the regional colonial capital of French West Africa for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Senegal was a key French ally in the region throughout the Cold War. France remains Senegal's biggest source of Senegalese imports and of bilateral development aid.<sup>76</sup> Until early 2010, France stationed over 1,000 troops at a military base in Dakar. However, France's

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<sup>72</sup> State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Country Database*, May 2010.

<sup>73</sup> CRS interviews with regional experts; Christopher Thompson, "How Drugs Are Funding a Boom in Senegal," *The Hindu*, March 11, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> EIU, *Country Profile 2008: Senegal*.

<sup>75</sup> United Nations, *U.N. Mission's Summary Detailed by Country*, February 28, 2011, at [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/feb11\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2011/feb11_3.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> According to statistics on official development assistance from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), accessed by CRS in March 2011.

recent attempts to reduce its military presence in Africa have coincided with attempts by Wade to assert greater independence from the former colonial ruler. In April 2010, in tandem with Senegal's celebration of 50 years of independence, France transferred its base back to Senegalese control and initiated a withdrawal of all but 300 military personnel. France is also reportedly renegotiating its long-standing bilateral defense cooperation agreement.<sup>77</sup>

## **Regional Relations**

Senegal largely enjoys cordial relations with neighboring states, and has generally refrained from direct involvement in neighboring conflicts, apart from regional diplomatic outreach and conflict resolution efforts.<sup>78</sup> Still, disputes have occasionally arisen. In November 2010, the government of Côte d'Ivoire recalled its ambassador and accused Senegal of interfering in domestic politics after Wade met with opposition presidential candidate Alassane Ouattara ahead of a tense run-off election against incumbent president Laurent Gbagbo.<sup>79</sup> Relations with neighboring Guinea-Bissau and The Gambia, which is entirely surrounded by Senegal, have been strained at times over these countries' alleged links to Casamance rebels and a low-level border dispute with Guinea-Bissau. In 1998, Senegal deployed troops in Guinea-Bissau in support of then-President João Bernardo Vieira, who was threatened by a military mutiny tied to the Casamance insurgency.

Senegal's relations with its northern neighbor Mauritania were historically acrimonious: in 1989, a dispute over grazing rights along the border sparked riots and vigilante reprisals in both countries, resulting in the forced expulsion from Mauritania into Senegal of tens of thousands of so-called "Afro Mauritians" (members of "black" ethnic groups that are present in both countries and have faced societal discrimination in Mauritania). The two countries have pursued a rapprochement in recent years, and the United Nations has facilitated the return of displaced populations. Wade brokered a June 2009 political agreement in Mauritania that paved the way for elections following a 2008 military coup.

## **Outreach to the Middle East and Ties with Iran**

Senegal is an active member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), having headed the organization in the 1970s and hosted the annual summit twice (in 1969 and 2008). Wade's administration has pursued greater economic and cultural ties with a number of Arab states and, until recently, Iran. Ahead of the 2008 OIC summit, Senegal benefitted from substantial infrastructure assistance from Arab aid agencies; according to the OECD, Arab countries' net official development assistance to Senegal totaled \$43.7 million in 2007 and \$19.7 million in 2008. In public appearances with Middle Eastern leaders, Wade often emphasizes a shared religious identity and heritage.

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<sup>77</sup> Reuters, "France Says to Pull Bulk of Soldiers from Senegal," June 8, 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Senegal and Mali were granted independence jointly as the Mali Federation; the union broke up less than a year later. In 1982, Senegal joined with The Gambia to form the nominal confederation of Senegambia. The envisaged integration of the two countries was never carried out, and the union was dissolved in 1989.

<sup>79</sup> Ouattara was subsequently confirmed by the United Nations as the winner of the election, but a prolonged standoff has ensued as Gbagbo refuses to step down. See CRS Report RS21989, *Côte d'Ivoire's Post-Election Crisis*, by Nicolas Cook.

Iran-Senegal ties warmed considerably in recent years, though they were recently disrupted due to Senegalese concerns over Iranian arms shipments to the region. In mid-December 2010, Senegal recalled its ambassador over a cache of arms that were seized in Nigeria in October. In February 2011, Senegal cut diplomatic ties, stating that a military investigation showed the arms were destined for Casamance rebels.<sup>80</sup> Previously, senior Iranian and Senegalese officials had made multiple visits to each others' capitals; both countries had pledged to strengthen economic, diplomatic, and cultural cooperation; and the Iranian government had referred to Senegal as its "special partner" in Africa while Senegal's foreign minister described Iran as a "friend of Africa."<sup>81</sup> Iranian interests appeared to focus on Senegal's diplomatic influence, Iran's attempt to foster cohesion with Muslim leaders while countering Arab cultural and political influence in Africa, and the perceived potential for Senegal to serve as a base for Iranian exports to the region.<sup>82</sup> In November 2009, during a visit by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Dakar, Wade reportedly referred favorably to Iran's nuclear program, stating that the Iranian president "tells me that his country is simply developing uranium for peaceful means."<sup>83</sup>

## U.S. Relations

The State Department refers to U.S.-Senegalese relations as "excellent."<sup>84</sup> Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush both visited Senegal during their tenures, and President Wade met President Bush at the White House in June 2001. U.S. officials have nevertheless criticized recent democracy and governance trends. The State Department's FY2012 aid budget request for Senegal refers to "the gradual erosion of governance and transparency," and states that democracy promotion is currently a focus of U.S. assistance activities.<sup>85</sup> In May 2010, the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal suggested in a statement that Senegal had to reduce corruption in order to retain Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) assistance (see below), provoking a hostile, though short-lived, public response from President Wade.<sup>86</sup>

Senegal is eligible for trade benefits, including apparel benefits, under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA; Title I, P.L. 106-200). Senegal hosted the fourth annual AGOA Forum in July 2005; it was attended by then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. A bilateral investment treaty was signed in 1983 and entered into force in 1990 after ratification by the U.S. Senate. U.S. direct foreign investment in Senegal is estimated at more than \$150 million; significant U.S. investors include General Electric, Fortesa International, Crown Manufacturing, Phillip-Morris,

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<sup>80</sup> AP, "Senegal Cuts Ties with Iran Over Weapons Shipment Believed to Target Senegalese Forces," February 23, 2011.

<sup>81</sup> *Le Monde*, "Sénégal: La Tentation Iranienne," April 16, 2010; IHS Global Insight, "Senegal Pushes for Renewed Relations with Iran During President's Visit," October 20, 2009; FARS, "Senegal FM Describes Iran as 'Friend of Africa,'" December 13, 2010.

<sup>82</sup> According to the IMF, the value of Iranian exports to Senegal jumped from less than \$1 million annually to \$23 million in 2007; they totaled \$16 million in 2009. IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics, accessed August 8, 2010.

<sup>83</sup> AFP, "Senegal Supports Iran's Stance in Nuclear Dispute," November 26, 2009.

<sup>84</sup> State Department, "Senegal: Background Note."

<sup>85</sup> State Department, FY2012 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.

<sup>86</sup> Wade criticized the Ambassador's statement and, referring to MCC aid, said the United States should "take it and give it to some country where people don't mind being insulted." Reuters, "U.S. Tells Senegal Aid Hangs on Anti-Graft Effort," May 27, 2010; AFP, "Senegal President Snaps at US Over Corruption Comment," May 29, 2010.

Pfizer, and Citibank.<sup>87</sup> U.S. bilateral imports totaled \$5.1 million in 2010, and bilateral exports totaled \$217.7 million.<sup>88</sup>

## U.S. Assistance

Bilateral foreign assistance focuses on democratic governance, economic growth, rural development, public health, food security, reconciliation in Casamance, and military professionalism. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has invested over \$1 billion in Senegal since 1961.<sup>89</sup> The bulk of current bilateral assistance funding is devoted to economic growth, agriculture, and health. Senegal also benefits from a wide range of multilateral assistance through international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the African Development Bank (AfDB), all of which receive substantial financial support from the United States. In 2004, Senegal became eligible for \$850 million in multilateral debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative.<sup>90</sup>

Bilateral aid through State Department and USAID accounts has increased significantly in recent years, from under \$60 million in FY2007 to \$106.3 million in FY2010 (**Table 1**), not including Senegal's \$540 million MCC compact. The Obama Administration has requested \$119.9 million for FY2012. The increase largely reflects growing investments in food security and health assistance. Other agencies that fund and implement assistance programs in Senegal include the Defense Department, the Department of Agriculture, the Peace Corps, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

**Table 1. U.S. Bilateral Assistance for Senegal, Selected Accounts**  
\$ thousands

	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010 (actual)	FY2011 (requested)	FY2012 (requested)
<b>TOTAL</b>	58,755	57,859	93,754	109,480	136,935	119,860
DA	14,846	21,798	55,834	56,528	75,150	56,250
ESF	4,000	0	0	400	0	0
Food Aid (P.L. 480)	4,898	4,070	3,355	Not available	Not available	Not available
GHCS (State Dept.)	300 [Child Survival and Health, CSH]	1,535	1,535	1,768	1,535	1,535
GHCS (USAID)	29,116 [CSH]	29,279	32,043	48,350	57,350	60,800
FMF	500	0	0	300	400	325
NADR	3,975	- <sup>a</sup>	- <sup>a</sup>	1,143	-	-

<sup>87</sup> State Department, "2010 Investment Climate Statement—Senegal," May 2010.

<sup>88</sup> U.S. International Trade Commission data, accessed on March 25, 2011.

<sup>89</sup> USAID Senegal, "USAID/Senegal: A Look Back at Almost 50 Years of Progress," 2010, at <http://senegal.usaid.gov>.

<sup>90</sup> International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, "Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative – Statistical Update," March 31, 2004.

	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010 (actual)	FY2011 (requested)	FY2012 (requested)
IMET	1,120	1,177	987	991	1,000	950
INCLE	0	0	0	0	1,500	0

**Source:** State Department Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, FY2009-FY2012

**Notes:** This table reflects bilateral assistance authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (P.L. 87-191, as amended) and Title II of the Food for Peace Act (P.L. 480). It does not include aid disbursed from regional accounts or funded through agencies other than the State Department and USAID.

DA=Development Assistance; ESF=Economic Support Fund; GHCS=Global Health and Child Survival; FMF=Foreign Military Financing; NADR=Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs; IMET=International Military Education and Training; INCLE=International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement.

- a. While the State Department has not requested any bilateral NADR funding since FY2008, Senegal received at least \$4.88 million in regional Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) between FY2007 and FY2009, which is funded through the NADR account, under the regional Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership.

## Agricultural Development and Food Security

USAID bilateral assistance for agricultural development, which is funded largely through the DA account, increased significantly in FY2009 as part of the Obama Administration's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, to \$33 million from \$1.2 million in FY2008.<sup>91</sup> Current programs focus on increasing food productivity and access to domestic and regional markets. A USAID-led natural resources management program further aims to bolster the sustainable, profitable, and decentralized use of agricultural and other resources. Efforts are being made to coordinate USAID's agricultural programs with implementation of Senegal's MCC Compact, which is also partly focused on food security. Current programs are expected to lay the foundation for a multi-sectoral, multi-year strategy organized under the Administration's new Feed the Future initiative, of which Senegal is one of 13 African focus countries.<sup>92</sup> USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) also funds and coordinates regional emergency food security responses, and USAID has supported regional drought and locust invasion preventive efforts.

## Health

Health assistance, which totaled over \$50 million in FY2010, focuses on decreasing maternal and child mortality, preventing and treating prevalent diseases—notably, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS—and improving health care delivery. USAID has provided support to Senegal's national HIV/AIDS strategy, which has been praised by health advocates. Senegal is one of 15 focus countries for the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), which is led by USAID and implemented with the CDC. In line with Senegal's own malaria control strategy, PMI supports four key interventions to prevent and treat malaria: insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor insecticide spraying, preventive treatment for pregnant women, and diagnosis and treatment.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Figures provided by USAID, July 2010.

<sup>92</sup> Senegal's FY2010 "implementation plan" for Feed the Future is at [http://www.feedthefuture.gov/documents/FTF\\_2010\\_Implementation\\_Plan\\_Senegal.pdf](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/documents/FTF_2010_Implementation_Plan_Senegal.pdf). See CRS Report R40945, *The U.S. Global Food Security Initiative: Issues for Congress*, by Charles E. Hanrahan and Melissa D. Ho, for background.

<sup>93</sup> *Country Profile, President's Malaria Initiative: Senegal*, April 2010.

## **Security Assistance and Cooperation**

Along with France, the United States is a top provider of training, equipment, and support for Senegal's armed forces.<sup>94</sup> In part because the United States sees Senegal as a potential target of violent extremism, and because Senegal is perceived as a partner in security cooperation, Senegal benefits from a range of U.S. counter-terrorism assistance programs. The United States has also provided counternarcotics aid amid growing U.S. concern over drug trafficking from South America through West Africa. Bilateral security assistance additionally focuses on military professionalization, maritime security, and peacekeeping training.

Senegal is one of 10 participant countries in the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP), a multi-year, interagency program aimed at defeating terrorist organizations in North and West Africa by promoting democratic governance, discrediting terrorist ideology, and strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities. The State Department has provided at least \$4.88 million in Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) through TSCTP to Senegalese police and aviation, maritime, and border security agents.<sup>95</sup> Through its complementary Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS), the Defense Department (DOD) has conducted a number of exercises and conferences with the Senegalese armed forces; in May 2010, Senegal participated in "Operation Flintlock" in Burkina Faso, a multinational military exercise coordinated by DOD's U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Flintlock aims to enhance regional counter-terrorism cooperation in North and West Africa. Other U.S. agencies providing assistance in coordination with TSCTP include the Department of Treasury and the Department of Justice.

Senegal has benefited from several DOD "Section 1206" security assistance programs since FY2007, including two multi-country regional counter-terrorism programs in support of OEF-TS, totaling \$4.5 million, and three regional maritime security programs totaling \$26.5 million.<sup>96</sup> DOD also funds counternarcotics assistance in Senegal. Senegal further benefits from a State Partnership Program with the National Guard of Vermont.

## ***Peacekeeping Training***

Over 12,000 Senegalese soldiers have received U.S. training through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which assists troops planning to deploy in international peacekeeping missions. Senegal is the fourth-ranking country worldwide in terms of the total number of personnel trained through the program.<sup>97</sup> The Administration's FY2011 request for Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds for Senegal states that they will be used to support Senegal's participation in "multinational responses to threats to peace" in Africa.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> State Department, "Background Note."

<sup>95</sup> Figures provided by the State Department and the Defense Department, FY2007-FY2009.

<sup>96</sup> Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military and maritime security forces. For background, see CRS Report RS22855, *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress*, by Nina M. Serafino.

<sup>97</sup> Figures provided by the State Department, June 2010.

<sup>98</sup> FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations.

## **Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact**

Senegal has been eligible for MCC assistance since the start of eligibility determinations in 2004. Eligibility is based on policy performance, relative to the median for low-income countries, on a range of criteria related to political freedom, government service provision, and economic governance.<sup>99</sup> In April 2009, the MCC awarded Senegal \$13.39 million to support the development of a compact. In September 2009, the MCC approved a five-year, \$540 million compact aimed at encouraging economic growth through improvements in infrastructure and agricultural production. The compact, which entered into force in September 2010, focuses on road rehabilitation and expanding irrigation in two geographic regions that are considered to hold potential for commercial agriculture, the northern Senegal River Valley and the southern Casamance region. During the official compact signing, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton encouraged President Wade to “make Senegal the shining example of what a free market democracy can look like in the world.”<sup>100</sup>

## ***Congressional Concerns***

Several Members of Congress have expressed concerns over the decision process and timing of Senegal’s MCC compact, given perceived democratic backsliding and rising corruption. In March 2010, U.S. Senator Arlen Specter wrote to the MCC’s chief executive officer, Daniel Yohannes, that allegations of corrupt practices by Senegalese officials “lend the impression that the MCC country team may not be responding adequately to the problem of corruption.”<sup>101</sup> During an April 2010 hearing on the MCC before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, Chairwoman Nita Lowey raised concerns over corruption and restrictions on private enterprise in Senegal and stated, “this was supposed to be a new process, and we’re seeing business as usual, corruption as usual.”<sup>102</sup> In media comments in August 2010, Representative Ed Royce referred to Senegal’s MCC compact as “a mistake.”<sup>103</sup>

MCC officials have defended the decision to award Senegal a compact, stating that Senegal has performed in the top quartile on most MCC indicators, including “control of corruption”; that Senegal’s government is highly committed to the compact’s policy objectives; and that Senegal is also “a good investment bet” for the MCC’s food security and global health initiatives.<sup>104</sup> MCC officials have also stated that there are ample policy tools at their disposal to monitor MCC disbursements and to ensure Senegal’s compliance with good governance standards throughout the duration of the compact, including regular consultation with Senegalese officials and the potential to partially or wholly terminate disbursements if negative governance trends continue.<sup>105</sup> In September 2010, MCC Vice President for Compact Implementation Patrick C. Fine stated that prior to enabling the compact to enter into force, “we consulted with civil society. We’ve had very

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<sup>99</sup> See MCC, “Senegal FY10” and “Senegal FY09,” at [www.mcc.gov]. For background, see CRS Report RL32427, *Millennium Challenge Corporation*, by Curt Tarnoff.

<sup>100</sup> MCC, “MCC Board of Directors Approves \$540 Million Compact with Republic of Senegal,” September 7, 2009; State Department, “Secretary of State Clinton Delivers Remarks at Signing Ceremony of Grant Agreement Between the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Government of Senegal,” September 16, 2009.

<sup>101</sup> David Freddoso, “Specter: Senegal shakes down Americans. Twice,” *The Washington Examiner*, March 16, 2010.

<sup>102</sup> Hearing on the Millennium Challenge Corporation, April 14, 2010, transcript via Congressional Quarterly (CQ).

<sup>103</sup> Chuck Neubauer, “For Senegal: U.S. Aid, 164-Ft. Statue,” *The Washington Times*, August 15, 2010.

<sup>104</sup> “Millennium Challenge Corporation Hosts Post-Board Public Outreach,” March 25, 2010, transcript via CQ.

<sup>105</sup> MCC response to CRS inquiry, September 22, 2009.

candid conversations with the government. We looked at what steps had been taken in the last two years to address some of the genuine concerns that people had, and we looked at Senegal's overall score on our indicators... And when we did all of that we came to the conclusion that entry into force was merited at this time."<sup>106</sup> In congressional testimony in March 2011, MCC CEO Daniel Yohannes stated that Senegal had reformed certain procurement procedures in response to pressure from the MCC, the State Department, and multilateral institutions.<sup>107</sup>

## Outlook

As Senegal prepares for national elections in 2012, tensions may persist between its record as a stable democracy and concerns over recent negative political trends. The upcoming elections are reportedly seen by many Senegalese as a potential watershed for the country's political future, in which Senegal may either further its democratic consolidation through a second peaceful and transparent transition between elected civilian administrations, or potentially experience a flawed election that could damage its international image.<sup>108</sup> Senegal's recent economic performance, and a renewed focus on food security, may provide the foundation for enhanced socioeconomic development. At the same time, growing corruption, insecurity in Casamance, and the potentially distortive effects of transnational drug trafficking could pose barriers to future growth and security. Events in the turbulent surrounding region—which has seen two military coups since 2008, in Guinea and Mauritania, in addition to lingering political unrest in Guinea-Bissau and renewed civil war in Côte d'Ivoire—may also impact Senegal's trajectory.

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<sup>106</sup> Millennium Challenge Corporation Holds Public Outreach Meeting, September 29, 2010, via CQ.

<sup>107</sup> House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2012 Appropriations for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, March 15, 2011, via CQ.

<sup>108</sup> One local media commentator has speculated that in 2012, "Senegal will either show itself truly democratic or won't be for much longer." *Walfadjri*, "Election Présidentielle: Qui en 2012?" August 27, 2009; CRS translation.